

Socialist Fight

Issue No. 1 Winter/Spring 2009. Price: Concessions: 50p Waged: £2, €3.

Israel/Palestine – For a Bi-National Workers State!



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Socialist Fight is published by the
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Unity is strength, L'unité est force, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, Minimada iyo isku xirnaantu waa awood ama xoog sidaa darteed waa inaan isku xirnaanaa, Związki zawodowe, Einheit ist Stärke, Всеединство прочность, bashkimi ben fuqine, L'unità è la resistenza, 团结是力量, A unidade é a força, 単一性はある 強さ, De eenheid is de sterkte, Ní neart go chur le céile, 단일성은 이다 힘 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

Beware of treacherous misleaders

EDITORIAL

We are launching Socialist Fight because we were convinced that the current financial, economic and political crisis of capitalism is the deepest we have faced in our lifetimes. All the contradictions of previous crises were only overcome by preparing this crisis, by ever expanding debt and thereby masking the effects of the falling rate of profit. The laws of capitalism have produced this crisis, not the greed of bankers or the mistakes of short-sighted governments or even the opportunism of Alan Greenspan.

America fought WWII not just to defeat the economic model of Nazi Germany or the state-planned economy of the USSR or that of the colonial empires of old Europe, Britain and France but to overcome all opponents of the free market. They sought to impose their neo-liberal agenda on the whole world after the war, whilst exempting themselves as Britain did in the last globalised economy in the nineteenth century, because theirs was the most powerful and efficient economy based on Taylorism and Fordism and they had the best military. But they encoun-



The fascist Pietro Badoglio, Togliatti's leader to save Italian capitalism in 1946.

tered problems. The world was bipolar after WWII because the USSR had triumphed over Nazi Germany and the war had given a powerful impulse to revolutionary forces everywhere.

But Stalinism betrayed these immediate challenges, which reached their high points in Italy, Greece and Vietnam. CPI leader Togliatti issued his infamous instructions from Moscow signalling the Salerno Turn away from the armed partisans in control of almost all the cities of northern Italy, entered the government of the fascist Pietro Badoglio, 2nd Duke of

Addis Ababa (he led the invasion of Ethiopia), as minister without portfolio, voted for the Lateran Pacts and betrayed the Italian revolution. Stalin's percentage agreement consigned Greece to capitalism, the KKE led by Zachariadis chose Stalin and class compromise over Tito and the armed struggle, the Greek Stalinists murdered Titoists and 800 Trotskyists and the Kremlin watched in silent approval as the British and US armies massacred the revolution. Ho Chi Minh savagely put down the Vietnam revolution, murdered the great Trotskyist leader Tạ Thu Thâu and welcomed back the French troops on the instructions of Stalin. Maurice Thorez in France and Stalinists in eight other European countries entered popular front governments to save capitalism.

The oil crises of 1973 revived the revolutionary efforts of 1968. The 1974 revolutions in Portugal, the overthrow of the Colonel's Regime in Greece and the colonial uprisings in Angola and Mozambique thwarted for a period the neo-liberal offensive by the US and its international allies.

However the assault by Reagan's Paul Volker and Thatcher inflicted enormous defeats on the US and British working class, highlighted by the defeat of the British Miners in 1985. The Star Wars offensive, the huge cost of the Afghanistan war and the collapse of the price of oil eventually led to the collapse of the deformed and degenerate workers states in Eastern Europe and the USSR in 1989-91. Now the US had finally achieved its pre-WWII goal, history had ended and the whole world was neo-liberal apart from the last few remaining workers states and economies like Yugoslavia and Iraq which were brutally repressive but nonetheless still strong enough to refuse to allow unrestricted access to their markets. They saw what unrestricted access had done to the economies of Africa and south Asia in particular and did not wish to take that road.

And so they had to be invaded to teach them, and the rest of the hold-outs, a lesson. But the 'war on terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan is meeting fierce resistance. And now Greece is in revolt, the first of the major class wars of the economic crisis. Italy is also simmering.

And Britain too will see its major class struggles. But we know that its present leadership, from Gordon

Brown to Brendan Barber to Unite's Tony Woodley and Derek Simpson will lead nothing but defeats.

But what of the parties of the left? We will expose their opportunism in our publication and in practice by engaging with them in struggle so winning the best revolutionary fighters in a battle for international revolutionary regroupment. In the first place we can say that George Galloway's Respect Renewal, which ludicrously contains the 'eco-socialists' of the USFI's ISG, is an opportunist popular frontist fraud. The SWP split to the left, marginally, but they can make no principled critique of their past relationship with Galloway and so now faces a split themselves. John Rees, Lindsey German and Chris Nineham have resigned from the CC to save Rees's face and prepare a fightback, based on the Stop the War Coalition, which they control. But both sides are united against the upsurge of the membership against decades of bureaucratic, not-in-front-of-the-children control freakery. The Socialist Party wants to build its own labour movement as a left cover for their capitulation to the TU bureaucracy like Mark Serwotka in the PCS.

The Alliance for Workers Liberty has disgraced itself once again by giving its endorsement to Israel to bomb Iran and refusing critical support to Hamas against the Zionist onslaught. That leaves Workers Power, Permanent Revolution and the neo-Kautskyites of the CPGB. We will be working in that milieu in the main, it is there that we fight out differences and develop our agreements.

The terrible bombing of Gaza, given the green light by Bush and Brown, the whole of world imperialism and the treacherous Arab bourgeoisie, particular Egypt's Hosni Mubarak who refuses assistance to such a beleaguered people, gives us a glimpse of what we are up against and shows us that the imperialists and their allies will stop at nothing to maintain their rule in the way they want it.

But we have faith in the world working class, in the British, European, Japanese, Chinese, etc. and in the US working class too who will fight as they always have done; the US Longshoremen in the west coast have shown the way by striking against the war in Iraq. We recognise the vital need for revolutionary leadership internationally, that is why we are Trotskyists and that is what we will be struggling to build.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International, Go Forward!

London Buses: Strike on? Maybe! by A J Byrne

CLASS STRUGGLE

The fight has gone out of the dispute over pay which caused such disruption on London's buses in August, September and October of last year. The original plan was to fight for the same wages and conditions for all busworkers across London. £30,000 or 5% whichever is the greater was the target. The TGWU/Unite claimed that pay can vary across companies from £20,000 to £28,000, including shift allowances, bonuses and unsocial hours payments. The Unite claim would take drivers' salaries to a minimum of £30,000 a year or a 5 percent increase, whichever is the greater.

Other key points in the unified claim for bus drivers are:

**A maximum of 4 hour 30 minutes of continuous driving duty before a break
7 hours 36 minutes maximum time on duty per day
38 hour weekly time on duty**

Time on duty to be spread over a maximum of 10 hours daily (currently a 12-hour spread)

Drivers to be allowed a minimum of 20 minutes to carry out security and safety checks on their bus before beginning to drive

A minimum of 11 hours between duties

There were a number of serious problems with this approach. Even if everyone got the £30,000 it would still not mean equality because back in 1993-94 the eleven different companies that then took over from London Transport imposed eleven different sets of wages and conditions and every new small cowboy company that won a route imposed their own. Within companies and within individual garages new routes were won by tendering on new rates until the First/Centrewest strike of 2000 when thirteen different rates applied in that main garage alone. That victory led to increased militancy which won improved wage rates and a gradual elimination of different rates within companies but the cross company disparities were never tackled.

LT and its successor TfL under Livingstone continued to exploit these differences by the competitive tendering regime, maintaining a downward pressure on wages. In his last year in office Livingstone tightened the tendering process to close a big gap in funding. Routes have been lost by all companies since to lower tenders, often from new operators with lower rates and worse conditions.

Given the injurious effects of competitive tendering it seems inexplicable that the London Convenors committee and the Unite bureaucracy led by Senior Organiser Peter Kavanagh is so dead set against campaigning for its abolition. Moreover the vagueness of the claim meant that the crucial issue of harmonising conditions was never tackled. Some companies pay unsocial hours, some do not, some have good overtime and work rest day rates, other pay flat rates at all times, all only pay overtime after the scheduled duty is complete so a five day, twelve hour spreadover duty would pay flat rates all the way through. And some pay for the forty minute meal relief but the majority do not. It stands to reason that before £30,000 means anything these conditions must be harmonised, that is the company convenors must come to an agreed set of conditions to be endorsed by the shop stewards and then balloted by all the bus drivers in London. This work has not even begun.

Furthermore there is the question of how a London wide deal could be struck given that all negotiations take place on an individual company level. Kavanagh has floated the idea of a TfL committee negotiating with Unite on behalf of all companies, given that TfL are the ultimate paymasters. Livingstone just ignored the idea. Johnson simply said 'no' and has now begun to privatise the only TfL run company, the small East Thames Buses, which has the best conditions like a final salary pension scheme. Surely a campaign to bring the buses back into public ownership is an absolute must but again, seemingly inexplicably, the London Convenor's Committee and Kavanagh are resolutely opposed.

Which brings to the strike wave, which is still apparently ongoing. It has its own website at;

<http://www.londonbusworkers.com/?q> but the last entry was on 21 October explaining that the strikes due on 22 October (the next day!), which would have involved 14,000 drivers had been called off because, "an injunction granted to Metrobus in the high court earlier this month, and the threat from all of the other companies to pursue the same course of action, has caused Unite to suspend industrial action while it seeks legal guidance".

Metrobus has only 1,000 drivers but



Bus strikers at Lea Interchange in September (Pic: Swalee Emambacus).

nonetheless 'the threat' was enough to send the convenors of the other 13,000 drivers led by Kavanagh scurrying for cover. On top of that there was no official communication from the union so that drivers discovered that the action had been called off from company notices, which some militants demanded be ignored as a company ploy. Since then Unite has conducted a consultative ballot of all eight companies on 5 December, when drivers were under all the pre-Christmas financial pressures, which resulted in a renewed mandate by about 75%. Cynics suggested this was a disappointment for the union leaders, now stuck in a dispute they did not want but do not know how to finish. So now we can apparently expect more strikes in January and February after the legally required postal ballot, which was supposed to begin on 5th January. Or can we?

The reason for the fierce opposition to ending competitive tendering and to campaigning for public ownership is the corrupt relationship many convenors and 'reps' (this is the favoured term rather than 'shop steward') have with their companies. Convenors are on full time secondment as are reps in big garages. All stewards enjoy the free weekend in the TGWU's hotel in Eastbourne where garage managers and more senior managers and chief executives involve them in 'partnership' programmes, often led by a professional 'partnership' company. There they learn loyalty to the company's 'corporate values' washed down by generous and unlimited quantities of free alcohol and the best of cuisine.

So when a strike comes their loyalty to the company is tested by their desire to look after the best interests of their members or maybe it is only a desire to get re-elected every two years. In this dispute convenors have been told they will have to go back driving buses.

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Some reps in the larger garages have already lost their full time secondment. And there are other, no less important favours under threat. Many of the pro-management convenors and stewards rely on the company to deal with any militant opponents. They simply go to the senior manager and ask them to discipline the 'troublemaker' as a 'frightener' or sack them if that does not work. But it is difficult to expect that level of cooperation when you organise strikes against the company. And the Eastbourne spring junkets must also be called into question now.

There is yet a further problem. Given the appalling corruption of Unite on the buses members in increasing numbers have been voting with their feet and joining the RMT. As one senior RMT leader said, "we tell them to go back and reform their own union but they say that is impossible because they have it all sown up with the managers". So Kavanagh has a problem. If he does not deliver in this year at this wage offensive many more will leave for the RMT. And his company convenors are not unduly bothered because the recognition agreement is with Unite and even if 90% joined in individual ga-

rages the convenor and the reps would still retain their privileges as long as it did not pass 50% in the bargaining unit as a whole. Kavanagh cannot be that complacent, he must defend his union as best he can by making some minimal progress at least. And not all convenors and shop stewards are corrupt (maybe the majority of the former and a large minority of the latter). The best of them are genuinely inspired by the growing militancy of the membership. But it is the corrupt ones that still call the tune in London and do not expect Unite to do anything drastic about that soon. So strike on? Maybe!

Anti-Fascism, the UAF and the SWP by Steve Bagal

In 2008 the British National Party (BNP) have made big efforts at public campaigning in various cities/areas. This marks a new departure in their attempts to grow into a mass force, which is their immediate goal. Unite Against Fascism (UAF) is their mainstream opponent in this. This anti-fascist organisation is a front for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and is supported by the most of the big Trade Unions but at a big political price. The SWP have become the organisation's sentries, they are present at all mobilisations against the BNP and do their best to split away the militant antifascists in collaboration with the police. This is a necessary precondition for them to retain the support of the trade union bureaucrats.

This is in line with their attempts to accommodate the Stalinists of the CPB (Morning Star), their partners in the Stop the War Coalition. UAF is a popular front organisation of the traditional Stalinist type; it is strongly opposed to militant anti-fascism, preferring to enter alliances with fair-weather 'anti-fascists' like Alan Sugar and others leading capitalists and members of the Conservative and Liberal parties, who are obviously our enemies. This is the line of Hope not Hate – vote anybody but the BNP, as if a vote for Tory Boris Johnson for London Mayor could stop fascism. It should be obvious to all class conscious workers that fascism is a product of capitalism in decline and faced with the alternative of fascism or socialism there is no doubt which these liberal petty-bourgeois (and bourgeois) forces will choose. And to accommodate them we must agree to abandon our own revolutionary programme (although this is not a problem for the SWP as they have no



programme at all!). The liberal bourgeoisie's first priority is to prevent revolution, defending the so-called 'multi-kulti democracy' we apparently live in, which is only a cover for the increasingly naked class oppression faced by all workers in modern bourgeois society, comes second to that. They see no need to fight effectively against fascists; Weyman Bennett's (the SWP's CC member in charge of UAF) antics in collaborating with the police have become legendary on the anti-fascist left and when combined with bogus 'revolutionary' empty propaganda does serious damage to the real fight. (PR website www.permanentrevolution.net/entry/2433, Liverpool: Cops defend the fascists – Weyman Bennett defends the cops)

We counterpose the traditional communist tactic of the United Front, as outlined by Lenin at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 and developed by Trotsky to combat the disastrous ultra-leftism of the Stalinist Third Period in Germany. Our understanding of combating fascism starts with the need for physical confrontation of all racists and fascists where they attempt to peddle their filth among working people and the dispossessed who may be vulnerable to it: militant antifascism is our creed; the working class must be involved in an active and democratic way if we really are going to smash fascism in the fight for SOCIALISM. The leaders of UAF fail to understand that fascism is the 'last resort' of capitalism and the only effective way to

fight it is with socialist/revolutionary ideas and methods! Whilst we are doing this we are placing demands on the bureaucratic misleaders of the working class – Fascism is a class issue, mobilise to fight it now!

The Liberals and Tories that are friends of the UAF Popular Front are enemies of the working class – of that there can be no question! They are infinitely closer politically to fascism than to the working class, regarding the BNP as over enthusiastic patriots who are doing good work against 'troublemaking' socialists and trade unions. So our tactic must be to mobilise the organised working class in the TUs, Labour party branches and CLPs to fight for their own class interests, only this will open the road to socialism and defeat fascism.

What do we propose?

- that "organising committees" are established in all areas, firstly in those areas in which the fascists are attempting to organise!
- These need to be comprised of working class people and their representatives, and should be established in communities as well as in workplaces in order that all potential allies of the organised workers may be involved!
- that the organised labour movement takes up the matter of anti-fascism, and mobilises for struggle!
- Antifa workers and their allies should organise for militant antifa struggle, regardless of what the bureaucratic misleadership of the working class say.
- In antifascism as in all aspects of the class struggle, we are with the bureaucrats when possible, against them when necessary.

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Occupy and organise to defend council services!

by Steve Bagal

The situation of the Birmingham City Council (BCC)'s 40-odd thousand workforce is a grim one! Financial conglomerate Capita (capita.co.uk) have 'taken over' the running of the Council - the largest Local Authority in Europe, in an "undemocratic swindle"; Capita are proud to be "the UK's largest outsourcing company"! This means that all the Council's jobs and services are being handed to the private sector, while the council workers have to endure an endless round of attacks.

The table shows how Labour group misrule on the City Council has demoralised workers and allowed in the Tories:

Year	Con	Lab	Lib	Other
2008	49	36	32	3
2007	44	41	32	3
2006	41	44	33	2
2004	39	53	28	0
2003	35	57	23	2
2002	31	67	15	4
2000	28	66	18	5
1999	20	77	16	4

In Social Services, provision is being handed to the private sector by means of shutting down all of the council's homes and Daycentres. Of course - the people with disabilities and the young or elderly in care are still there, only in future they'll be looked after by the private sector with all that means... BCC say that units are shutting due to financial constraints, but of course in the private sector only the wages and conditions of the workers are cheaper and the Council will still pay! A similar situation exists in all departments of the BCC, and UNISON are now saying that one third of all BCC jobs will be gone within a year unless their plans are stopped!

The problem with UNISON, as with the other BCC unions (TGWU-Unite, GMB, UCATT) is that the real reasons for the closure programme are that all of the units - residential homes for people

requiring specialised care: disabled people, elderly people and young people as well as those with mental health problems, and Daycentres have all been systematically underfunded for more than 20 years, so are now in a decrepit state and actually we shouldn't have to work in

such places, nor the service users have to live there! They DO need knocking down, but BCC is using the opportunity to shut them and transfer provision to the private sector!

Meanwhile, the workers are being subjected to a strict regime of controls and restrictions as part of the new, disputed contract - imposed on us in April 08 without agreement, which means we are totally flexible and with the closure of units the Council are able to "reprovision" us to working in the places that have replaced the Council units - our wages have been lowered every year for a long time (10+ years), but are still well ahead of the conditions of the workers in the private sector though our jobs are being continually degraded!

We have to fight for Council services that are under the control of the workers and of the service users - all Council services are currently under attack, when it's well recognised that they actually need to be expanded! How should they be built up? The workers and the service users know! Council Unions have had little to say about the systematic underfunding that has led to the situation faced today where whole swathes of Council provision are being handed to the private sector as a direct result of this underfunding (CSCI the 'official' regulatory body says that the units - care homes and daycentres, are "unfit for purpose" and must close which is true actually!)

The unions have now decided to resist the closure programme - the closure of the units



Tory/LibDem Big City Plan for Birmingham; privatise all services, destroy jobs and conditions and abandon the most vulnerable in care homes to the vultures of the free market.

that the bureaucrats are based at, anyway and they say they are in favour of "committees of carers" at each threatened unit: that's a start though not a very good one, so many years too late and now that the plans of BCC/Capita are so advanced! It might just be in time to save the positions of the bureaucrats in the Branch elections this month though!

So what IS required?

Resistance to the closure programme! All threatened units must be kept open while new facilities are built!. This may have to be "under occupation" - plans should be drawn up to include all forms and methods of principled struggle including strikes and occupation, fully supported by the wider Labour Movement and those that are in favour of fighting to defend public services! Committees must be formed, led by the workers in each unit and to include service users and families plus the local Labour Movement, which can not only run the services on the basis of need but can spread the struggle to keep the services away from the private sector/"new providers"!

These committees - open to all who are prepared for action in defence of council services, should draw up plans for council services based on what is REQUIRED rather than on "what can be afforded" or on what's in the interests of the profiteers hoping to take over; committees must link up across units and departments in order that we can arrive at a genuine, coordinated plan!

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AWL - Two Stages, Two States, and utter political confusion by Tony Fox

The AWL held its meeting on the war in Gaza on 15th January in Clarges Mews W1, past the Kennel Club in a squat with helpful squatters running around to set up a light and find a room. When it eventually kicked off Robin Sivapalan ceded first place to Muayad Ahmed of the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq. The WCPI's greetings on May Day 2007 had implored assistance from the US; 'The Iraqi workers and their organizations are in urgent need to an active role and intervention by the world's civilized humanity in their support in this struggle'.

Muayad proposed a traditional Stalinist two stage revolution to achieve two states in Palestine. But he was troubled; "we must be careful, we are against Hamas but at the same time we must define this war in a political context, we should stop this outrage, stop this attack, we should not use slogans to blame both sides, stop the massacre does not mean we are not against Hamas". Nonetheless the solution was a bourgeois solution, "our first preference is for a socialist solution" he assured us "but that is not happening", it is "not practical" this arch Stalinist again asserted.

Robin, whose north west London AWL branch has been the main mobiliser of some clearly reluctant AWLers on the demonstrations (who could blame them?), spoke in utter political confusion. He was troubled that they could not bring their Two States banner on the demos (or fly Zionist flags!) as "they would be massacred", but the Muslim

youth were revolutionary although they were shouting slogans like, "Palestine will be free from the river to the sea".

When asked what is your solution they (the Muslim youth) said that there was no solution as long as Israel existed, and that Israel wanted to wipe out all the Palestinians. They said in 1948 Zionism was imposed by the British but in that war the Arab armies were led by the British Robin confidently informed us. Hamas, he also assured us, was conducting "a war for broader reasons over the bodies of the Palestinians". This was the most disgraceful remark of the night, defending Zionism. Israel, he said, could not be "just a pawn (of the US) and a self-generating evil at the same time", though he did not explain why not.

When it came to the two states question things got worse. This was a "bourgeois settlement", it was "not about justice and it would not correct any historical wrongs". It just meant "postponement of justice". "Why do you support it then" I could not stop myself saying. "It would be an immediate amelioration of suffering, it was the "ideological frontline in supplying the basis for any future unity of the working class in the area". With this totally unconvincing case, clearly unconvinced himself, he finished.

In the discussion I launched a strong attack on the pro-imperialism of the AWL from the Malvinas to the present, why they could not champion the oppressed against the oppressor and give critical support to Hamas as the democratically



With a mattress for a backdrop AWL leader Martin Thomas rallies his bored troops in defence of Zionism.

elected leadership of the Palestinians (this point was also made by a young female PR supporter). An Israeli anarchist also took them to task on the two states. Mark Osborn then launched a furious onslaught on his opponents, Galtieri was "a fascist" Hamas were clerical reactionaries who oppressed women, trade unions etc. He forgot to condemn Israel in any way in his outburst, I pointed out in a heckle.

Robin summed up by not mentioning, Gaza, Hamas, Israel or the massacre but made a long point on why we should not support the Tamil Tigers. In his defence he can plead youth and ignorance but he really must begin to distinguish between oppressor and oppressed. The anti-Semitism of a Palestinian under a hail of death from the skies is not the same as Hitler's anti-Semitism. We should fight for a bi-national workers' state not Stalinist/AWL two stages, two states. Trotsky's Permanent Revolution should clarify matters for any serious revolutionist.

LRC: The People's Charter: a pious prayer to capitalism by Tony Fox

The ever-deepening economic and political crisis of capitalism is forcing every political group to reassess its strategy and tactics. The Labour Representation (LRC) is faced with an alternative. At its National Committee meeting on 17th January Owen Jones proposed some measures for an 'economic crisis campaign' which are vague in many ways but amendable. For instance he wants, 'Full nationalisation of banks and financial institutions under democratic control with representation for consumers and workers'. But to make any progress towards workers' control the 'workers' have to be accountable to and recallable by labour movement bodies otherwise the opportunities for corruption by token worker directors are all too obvious. And these democratically

controlled banks must supply capital for products and services that serve a real need, they cannot remain free market casinos. And the 'workers representatives' must examine the books and report on where the money is going. But at least this document is addressing the right issues, we can forge these demands into transitional ones if we address the issue of workers control in a sensible way.

However the People's Charter is a totally different animal. Penned by the CPB and endorsed by our 'leaders' of the left (Bob Crow, John McDonnell, etc.) it is a vague, utterly reformist useless piece of propaganda which has no mobilising force for workers and no intention of challenging the system at all. In fact its broadness and

vagueness was welcomed by Jenny Fischer at the meeting as the basis for uniting as many as possible. Look at the first point on the economy;

'A fair economy for a fairer Britain. Take the leading banking, insurance and mortgage industries fully into democratic public ownership run for the benefit of all', etc, etc *ad nauseam*. This is the traditional Stalinist programme to act as a bulwark against revolutionary mobilisation. This is not for socialism, this is for a liberal capitalism which just will not be on offer anywhere while capitalism is in such a crisis. And when it is in crisis we have a chance to mobilise the forces and get rid of it. "No, no, no" they cry, "let us regulate it and it will be ok". It will not. We need to forge an action programme which moves us towards workers control and to do this we need to mobilise the workers in their workplaces, not wait in hope for a left Labour government which might never come.

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WORKERS INTERNATIONAL VANGUARD LEAGUE

**1ST Floor, Community House, 41 Salt River rd, Salt River, 7925,
ph: 021 4476777 fax: 0880214476777 ph 0822020617
e-mail: wivl@sn.apc.org
website: www.workersinternational.org.za , 23.10.08**

**Socialist Fight is
please to publish
this appeal from
these South
African comrades.**

International

Forward to Working Class Power!

Dear Comrades/Friends,

Re: Urgent Appeal to the working class, working class organizations and democratically-minded sympathisers to support WIVL's participation in the 2009 general Elections in South Africa

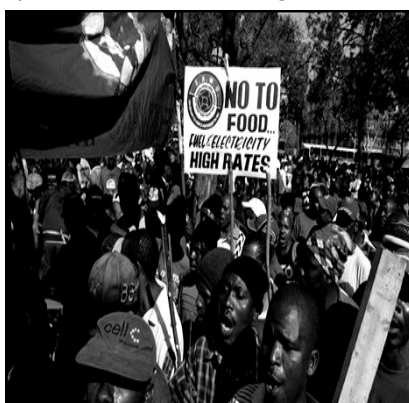
The WIVL has decided to contest the 2009 elections at national level. We call on working class activists, -organizations and sympathisers to support us in this campaign of further exposure of parliament. The mere fact that we will be the only group engaging in revolutionary exposure of parliament means that the bourgeoisie and their agents will put every obstacle in the way of our participation. This means, as they have done in the past, the Electoral Commission is likely to put prohibitively high deposits as a means of sidelining us. In 2003 the deposits were set at R150 000 for national level and R30 000 per province. This meant having to have R420 000 (about \$42 000) just to get on the ballot. We think that they may hike this even further this time around. Further, the mass media is likely to give little or no coverage to activities and protests organised by us. Thus we would have to generate our own media across the country.

This means that enormous resources are needed for our campaign of exposure of parliament, while at the same time building structures of resistance to capitalist exploitation, primarily branches of the WIVL, across the country.

We differ from all parliamentary parties in that they are chasing votes, trying to become part of the system. For us, if we can get sufficient votes to send some agitators into parliament to help further unmask it, this will be useful. For other parties, after the elections they fold up their machinery - spend the next period going back on their promises, start building connections with big capital, until the next election in 5

years time when they realise they need to chase for votes once more. For WIVL, it is different; on the day of the elections and immediately thereafter we will intensify the exposure of parliament; hopefully with the help of a few agitators in parliament, but mostly through mass action campaigns outside of parliament.

A key aspect of the current campaigns we have launched is that food, jobs and adequate housing for all can only come through the working class in power. The working class would not be able to take power through parliament but rather against it.



South Africa's giant mining companies were badly hit by a strike on 3 January over rising power, food and fuel prices.

We have also launched a 365-day campaign for women's rights. We need to organise visits and mass actions in all corners of the country, possibly even visiting neighbouring countries.

By the time the Electoral Commission makes its announcement of the new deposits needed it may be too late to raise the funds just to get on the ballot paper. Overall we feel we need a **minimum** of R1 million (\$100 000) for the campaign. We believe this is achievable. It means 100 000 workers each giving R10 or more. [For workers in other countries, this could be roughly taken as each worker giving 1 Euro, or \$1 or 1 pound]. However, any

contribution, large or small is most welcome. We call on workers in workplaces and working class communities to make collection lists and to give contributors proof of deposit of the relevant amounts.

The divisions within the ruling party is underpinned by frustrations of the masses not being met. The leadership of the 2 factions are fighting for the crumbs from the imperialist masters' table. The masses have begun to look past the ANC. Developments like this come rarely in history. Let us seize the moment and advance revolutionary politics by a thousand, if not a million steps. Already hundreds of workers are now joining WIVL, a first for our existence.

This election campaign is not only the responsibility of the working class in South Africa but of all working class fighters and supporters around the globe. A mass revolutionary WIVL is already a reality but this rapid development needs urgent support. Political consolidation and extension of groundwork is urgently needed. We thus appeal to supporters locally and internationally to help make revolutionary participation and exposure of the 2009 elections possible. A mass revolutionary vanguard party is within touching distance. Funds may be deposited directly into our account. Name of account:

**Workers International
Vanguard League (WIVL)
Bank: First National Bank
Branch code: 201609
Type: cheque
Account number:
50080016832**

For international deposits the SWIFT code **FIRNZAJJ** should be used with the above details.

Where possible, email us or fax or post us a note of the amount and date of deposit.

Yours in struggle
SHAHEED MAHOMED, General
Secretary, WIVL

Ph [27]822020617; Ph [27]
214476777

Fax [27]880214476777

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Hopi's new campaign: 'Smash the sanctions'

In the next few months, Hopi will be stepping up its campaign against the sanctions imposed on Iran. The sanctions clearly don't hurt the theocratic regime (neither the current leadership nor the reformist leaders-in-waiting). It is the normal working class people, the women and the unemployed, who are suffering most from the sanctions. As such, the sanctions campaign is integral to the

US plans of 'regime change from above'.

Hopi's tasks are threefold:

- 1) Campaigning to overthrow the existing sanctions
- 2) Campaigning to prevent new, additional sanctions being adopted
- 3) Raising money to help some of unemployed

Our campaign demands are:

- No to imperialist war! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US/UK troops from Iraq and all the Gulf region!
- No to any imperialist intervention. The immediate and unconditional end to sanctions on Iran.
- No to the theocratic regime!
- Opposition to Israeli expansionism and aggression!
- Support to all working class and progressive struggles in Iran against poverty and repression!
- Support for socialism, democracy

and workers' control in Iran!

- For a nuclear-free Middle East as a step towards a nuclear-free world!

Become a HOPI supporter by googling;

<http://www.hopoi.org/signup.html>

Or send us £10/£5 (unwaged) by either:

1. filling out a standing order form (regular income is extremely important for our campaigning work). Please return it to our address: Hopi, PO Box 54631, London N16 8YE
2. clicking the Paypal button online

Affiliated organisation

We encourage organisations to affiliate to Hopi.

- local organisation £25
- small national/regional organisation £50
- large national/regional organisation £100

Free Lex Wotton Campaign

An all-white jury returned a verdict of 'guilty' in the trial of Palm Island leader Lex Wotton on October 24 2006, for 'rioting with destruction'. Mr Wotton was sentenced to seven years in prison, reduced to six years for time already served. The verdict was met initially with stunned silence from Mr

Mr Wotton was charged after the November 2004 uprising on Palm Island, in which a police station, adjoining courthouse, a police residence and a vehicle were destroyed by fire.

The uprising occurred after the death in custody of Mulrunji Doomadgee, a 36-year-old Palm Island man who had been arrested for public nuisance by Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, the officer-in-charge of the Palm Island police station. Within an hour of his arrest, Mulrunji lay dead on the floor of a police cell, a victim of massive internal injuries, including a ruptured spleen, four broken ribs and a liver that had been 'almost cleaved in two' from a huge compressive force.

The community erupted on November 26 - a week to the day after the death - after they were told at a town meeting than a pathologist's report had found Mulrunji's death was an accident.

After two years of fully paid leave while awaiting trial on manslaughter charges Hurley was acquitted and has been promoted to Inspector of police working on the Gold Coast. He received a \$100,000 compensation from the Queensland Government for

property lost in the fire, legal bills were covered by the Queensland Police Union, and fundraising efforts by QPS members. The coroner's finding in 2006 that Hurley had fatally injured Mr Doomadgee by punching him repeatedly was overturned in the Townsville District Court just before Christmas 2008. The racist victimisation of Lex Wotton, the police murder of Doomadgee and the continuing 'deaths in custody' of aborigines has sparked a worldwide campaign in their defence.



Wotton's friends and family, who had been in court every day during the three-week trial. But as the reality began to sink in his mother Agnes cried out, 'No justice' as Correctional Services officers led Mr Wotton into the rear of the courthouse.

His wife Cecelia and his children were assisted from the courtroom by friends. They sobbed outside as a crowd of around 20 supporters looked on in stunned silence. Cecelia had to be assisted into a taxi, unable to speak and barely able to walk.

Sina Ana Brown-Davis sent a message to Free Lex Wotton NOW.

Support for Celecila & Family Warm Greeting & Respect to All

Another year and our brother Lex Wotton in still in gaol.

The family require assistance so they can meet the costs of visiting Lex.

Give as much as you can to.

FREE LEX WOTTON NOW Melbourne University Credit Union Limited

Account name: Free Lex Wotton

BSB 803-143

A/C number: 14305313

Paypal - You can just send money to:

freelexwotton@gmail.com

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Socialist Fight publishes this Call by the LTF as a comradely gesture:

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST BLOC
TO CONVENE AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PRINCIPLED
TROTSKYISTS AND REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS**

The members Leninist Trotskyist Fraction are the Communist Workers Group, New Zealand, International Workers League (LOI-CI) Argentina, International Workers Party (POI) Chile, Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL) Peru, Red October International (ORI) Bolivia, and the Trotskyist Fraction (FT)

**Mail address: PO Box 6595,
Auckland, New Zealand.
Email
cwgan@yaho.com
Class Struggle is also on
our website:
[http://
www.geocities.com/
communistworker/](http://www.geocities.com/communistworker/)**

The crisis and offensive of the capitalist imperialist system has become a crisis of the whole of humanity, which in the last instance, is the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. If the proletariat does not end the catastrophe facing the planet, then the imperialists will try to solve their economic crisis by means of wars and barbarism, risking the destruction of humanity.

The crisis of leadership cannot be resolved without settling accounts with the representatives of the 'Bolivarian Revolution' – the collection of recycled Stalinists, Social Democrats and bourgeois 'Socialists' – but most critically the renegades of Trotskyism that have trampled the program of the IV International of 1938 under the feet of the treacherous leaders, labour aristocracies and bureaucracies all over the world. A revolutionary regrouping of the healthy forces of Trotskyism and the of other revolutionary workers organizations, is necessary and urgent.

The reformists have proved that they cannot meet even the most minimum needs of the masses, much less lead the uprisings and revolutions that must come. Rotten capitalism cannot stop the masses from starving.

The urgent task of the moment is for a new Zimmerwald and Kienthal to regroup the global forces of revolutionary internationalists. That is why we put forward the 23 points as our responses to the critical acid tests which these revolutionary forces must pass in the regroupment process: the treacherous 'Bolivarian Revolution'; capitalist restoration in Cuba;

the war in the middle East; the tasks of internationalists on the Colombian, Venezuelan, Bolivian question, etc.

The time of national programs is finished. Only an international centre can learn and apply the revolutionary lessons from the acute events of the international class struggles, and guide the proletarian vanguard in each country according to the interests of world working class, overcoming the national pressure on the proletariat in any single country. The dissolution of the international centre of the IV International by the leaders of the US SWP in 1940, left each national section exposed to the terrible pressures of the national conditions in each country – of inter-imperialist World War and the defence of the USSR – and marked the beginning of the crisis and the degeneration of the IV International founded on 1938.

Today, it is necessary to build a new Zimmerwald and Kienthal that defends the continuity of the theory, revolutionary strategy and program of the Founding Congress of the IV International of 1938, and is prepared to challenge for the leadership of the exploited masses on the planet, so to make its revolutionary program, in the next period, part of the objective factor of world proletarian vanguard. The capitalist imperialist system has once more run aground on the rocks of a global economic and financial crisis. Under these crisis conditions, an International Conference of principled Trotskyists and revolutionary workers' organizations, must be our primary objective. The discussion and debate among all internationalist

currents around the acid tests we propose we expect will prove who are the revolutionary internationalists, and who are part of the reformist life-support system of the rotten capitalist imperialism. The laws of history are stronger than any apparatus. In 1989-1991, we witnessed the total bankruptcy of the centrists and opportunists who, in the name of Trotskyism and the IV International, allied with the Stalinists who were restoring capitalism in the degenerated workers states. There is not the slightest doubt that, in the heat of the current events of the world class struggle and facing new crises and mass uprisings, the deserters of Trotskyism with their openly reformist politics, will betray again and again.

Against this, it is necessary for the revolutionary internationalists to intervene now in all the struggles with the program of the IV International Congress of 1938, and transform the struggles of the Cuban workers and poor farmers against the capitalist restoration, the heroic resistance of the Iraqi, Palestinian masses and all the Middle East masses, and the struggles of the US workers the United States and other imperialistic powers, etc. Our purpose then is to fire up an revolutionary internationalist bloc to fight for a new Zimmerwald and Kienthal International Conference that can serve as the launch pad for an enormous revolutionary force of the masses that will, in last instance, with its struggles and victories, determine the course of the future of humanity.

May 1st 2008

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Greece in Revolt!

by Savas Michael Mastas of the Greek Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK) 8-9 December.

Athens and all Greece are in flames since Saturday night (6th December). The cowardly murder of a 15 years young boy by a member of the Special Guard of the Police in Athens was the immediate cause for a popular revolt, particularly of the youth, which embraced not only the Greek capital but the entire country. It is undoubtedly the biggest revolt since the time of the civil war of the 1940s and the Polytechnic School uprising in 1973 against the military dictatorship.

Immediately after the news of the death of the young boy the area near the site of the killing, near the Polytechnic University of Athens, was full of people, mainly youth. Clashes with riot police started and barricades were erected in the streets. The Polytechnic was occupied and a call for a demonstration next day was issued. Similar mobilizations took place the same night in Thessalonica, Ioanina, Crete, Patras and other Greek cities.

The pseudo socialist PASOK official opposition condemned the riots and their members in the leadership of the General Confederation of Labour voted together with the Right to cancel the march in Athens next Wednesday, December 10th, the day of a 24 hours General Strike.

The far left, mainly the forces of two fronts, of MERA, Front of radical Left, in which our Party, the EEK, participates and of ENANTIA, United Anti-capitalist Left, some Maoists and the Anti-authoritarian Movement (anarchist), coordinate their actions. We issued a joint Call for a Continuous struggle and a General Strike to overthrow the Government of the killers and put an end to its capitalist policies, which try to make the exploited pay for the crisis of the system.

EEK intervened in all the main cities of the country fighting to transform the strike into an indefinite General Strike on a program of transitional demands for a workers socialist way out from

the crisis, against the murderous capitalist State and its government, for workers power.

The Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis met with the President of the Republic, the leaders of the opposition parties in parliament, and the Chairman of the Parliament. Although he did not succeed in getting their direct endorsement for the declaration of a State of Emergency, the government is moving in this direction, namely to declare a 'state of exception' using the article 11 of the Constitution to forbid demonstrations and occupations. The hysterical campaign of the bourgeois mass media against the 'hooligans' is a part of these preparations.

Tomorrow is the day of the 24 hours General Strike against the government budget, which was announced some time ago. In collaboration with the Right, the PASOK leadership of GSEE (General Confederation of Labour) has cancelled the rally in front of its headquarters as well as the march. Instead it will hold an 'all democratic memorial meeting' in Syntagma Square.

This PASOK leadership of George Papandreou limits itself to verbal criticisms that 'the government does not effectively use the police to protect social peace, the property of the citizens and the public buildings'...

The Stalinist KKE leadership have gone farther to the right, by denouncing together with the government and the far right Synaspismos, the ex-Eurocommunists, as 'protector of the hooligans and provocateurs'. The General Secretary of KKE, Aleca Papariga described the young rioters as 'Talibans' created by the secret services of the State under the governments of PASOK and of New Democracy and now becoming uncontrollable!! She received an enthusiastic praise by



Students shout at riot police outside the police headquarters during a demonstration in Athens on December 15.

the right wing government and the fascist anti-Semitic leader of the far right.

The KKE organizes its own separate meetings in other locations at different times to the mass movement; they absolutely respect the social peace that the current government of boy killers wants to impose.

Synaspismos, forming with its allies in the extra-parliamentary left the 'Alliance of radical Left'-SYRIZA, calls for 'the democratic re-organization of the police' and other mild reformist economic measures to raise the living conditions of a young generation with a miserable present and without a future. Being under constant pressure from the right, Synaspismos / SYRIZA cancelled its previous decision to hold the rally in front of the GSEE headquarters and then participating in a popular march of the strikers. It will hold a rally nearby Syntagma Square.

The only march tomorrow in Athens will be that organized by a number of far left organizations, including EEK, from the Polytechnic University to Parliament. The situation, is precarious, open to all dangers for a police attack, but we will not yield to State terrorism and the cowardly pressures by reformists and Stalinists.

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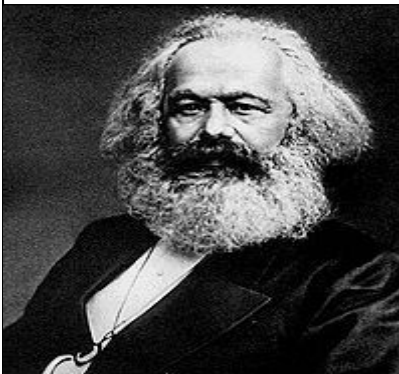
Platform of the International Trotskyist Current

Programme

1. We stand with Karl Marx:

'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (General Rules of the International Workingmen's Association, October 1864).

2. We recognise the need for programmatic development in order to understand the tasks of



Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working class themselves'.

the contemporary period – programme first! as Trotsky said. Because the emancipation of the working class can only be the act of the working class itself, and because social-democracy and Stalinism have long since passed into the camp of counter-revolution, revolutionaries must organise themselves around a revolutionary programme both in Britain and internationally.

3. We see democratic soviets/ workers' councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers' control as the precondition for the revolutionary struggle for political power. So it is necessary to agitate for maximum workers' self-organisation in struggle; every strike, occupation or action by the working class that increases their collective self-confidence is a step towards revolution and so bitterly opposed by capitalists and their apologists amongst the trade union bureaucracy. Soviet democracy, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat, must be the basis of the organisational form of the workers' state, a repressive but unavoidable transitional phase in the process of the development of communism where the workers defend their new state against counterrevolution and organise the production of life's necessities so that want and oppression, rights and democracy wither away together with the repressive state and are no longer needed because of the free availability of all of life's needs and wants; alienation in all its forms has finally been superseded by social and economic equality.

4. The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis, of armed bodies - like the army and police - which act in defence of the capitalist system and class.

We acknowledge the need for a democratic Marxist Revolutionary Socialist Party to defeat this

capitalist state and political system. The process of revolution is based upon democratic interaction between party and class. This interaction creates the political conditions for the self-emancipation of the working class.

The process of economic success in transcending the alienating power of capital will also facilitate the political conditions to develop consent for the movement towards communism. The revolutionary process of transition to communism is based on the struggle to form an international federation of workers' states. Such a federation is required in order to overcome the worldwide poverty and starvation caused by the domination of global free market finance capital and end the threat of global ecological catastrophe.

5. We defend the heritage of the Russian Revolution and critically support the revolutionary thrust of the first four Congresses of the Third Communist International before the victory of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy and the imposition of the theory of socialism in one country after 1924. We counterpose of the violence of the oppressed to the violence of the oppressor and critically defend the methods of Trotsky in the Civil War and in the taking of the Kronstadt Fortress in 1920. We oppose Libertarian Marxists, 'Left' communists, platformists and traditional anarchists on this question, although agreeing with

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them on the final goal of an egalitarian communist society based on the production of the superabundance of life's necessities in conformity with a sustainable biosphere.

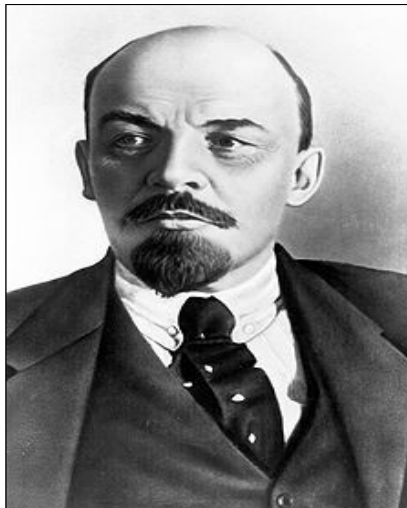
6. Following the collapse of the Second International the October Revolution 'shook the world' and, amongst other things, facilitated the formation of the Communist International. There were significant problems with the Comintern from the outset. The majority of German Communists saw the formation as premature and had concerns that the new International would be overly dominated by the Russian CP. Despite this, the early years of the Comintern represent a high point in working class organisation and remain an important point of reference for revolutionaries in the 21st century. We critically support the resolutions and manifestos of the first four congresses of the Comintern, critical because, for instance, the Comintern (including Trotsky until 1928) failed to apply the theory of permanent revolution to all countries; they operated a mistaken 'united front' with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk which led to a massacre of Turkish communists (1920-22) and opened the door for the Stalin/Zinoviev confusion which led to the massacre of the Shanghai Soviet in 1927.

7. We support Trotsky's Transitional Programme of 1938 in its context. We always practice the method embodied in that document because it is the Marxist method of mass work as advocated by Lenin in Left Wing

Communism; an Infantile Disorder in 1920. Nationalising of the banks under workers control is the appropriate transitional demand in the current crisis.

Open the books so committees of workers and consumers can determine where frauds and swindles have occurred and what part of the banking enterprises are simply parasitic. The anarchy of the capitalist free market produced this crises, the solution is to use public money to plan and organise production internationally for need and not for profit.

8. No to popular fronts with the political representatives of any



V I Lenin 's fought the 'left communists' to win the ranks of the working class by the United Front tactic.

capitalist class to 'defeat fascism', stop war or for any other reason and no to sectarian abstention from the class struggle. The Stalinists who subordinated the working class to a part of the bourgeoisie derailed the revolutions in both France and Spain in the 1930s. In Indonesia (1965) and Chile (1973) the results were the same. We defend working class independ-

ence under all circumstances. Marxists counterpose the united front tactic to popular frontism in order to relate to reformist workers; placing demands on reformist leaders both to advance our class interests and to expose and defeat the reformist leaders before their membership in the course of struggles. Under no circumstance does a united front include a non-aggression pact. We always retain the freedom to criticise.

9. We recognise the necessity for revolutionaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic parties despite their pro-capitalist leaderships when conditions are favourable. Rather than tail-ending, or seeking to become left-bureaucrats as the SP, the AWL, the ISG and SWP do we seek to build a rank-and-file movement independent of all bureaucracy, even its left variety as represented in Britain in the past by Arthur Scargill and today by Bob Crow, Mark Serwotka, etc. In the National Shop Stewards Network we do not want to 'seize control' from the current leadership around the SP, the SWP, or the RMT bureaucracy but to make it a real rank-and-file democratic movement that is independent of even left bureaucrats e.g. get rid of clause 3 which forbids intervention in the internal affairs of trade unions and make it open to all working class militants.

10. The British Labour party was never a socialist party. Clause 4, so beloved by left-reformists, was never more

than a fig leaf. The Labour party remains a bourgeois workers' party, that is to say, it is a pro-capitalists party based on the organised working class. So long as this remains the case, Marxists advance tactics it which may include both entryism and critical electoral support. We must not be part of the stupid, Stalinist third-period sectarian mistake the far left has been going through for the last 15 years or more; that because we understand that the Labour party and the trade union bureaucrats are class traitors the mass of the working also understand this and therefore the masses will come to us directly or we can con them by building a half-way-house, a more radical reformist Labour party Mark II. We advance tactics toward Labour party members as part of our united (rather than popular) front orientation, recognising the LP remains a type of workers' party. That is we need to expose the existing leadership of our class: this is where the pro-imperialist misleaders live; it is far more than 'tactics towards individual members' of the LP, and is about the LP being an arena which is still intimately linked to the TUs and so a vital arena for the class struggle.

11. We recognise the urgent necessity for a programme for women's liberation and prioritise work in defence of abortion rights, crèche facilities and equal pay. We fight for the creation of a working class women's movement. We recognise the leading role women have played in past revolutionary struggles and we emphasise

the contradiction of the under-representation of women on the contemporary revolutionary left. We fight for free abortion and contraception on demand, for equal pay, for free 24-hour childcare in well equipped nurseries and kindergartens. We are for the abolition of all laws relating to prostitution which always criminalise women and/or place them in danger of violence and death.

12. We aim to develop a pro-



'Generalissimo' Chiang Kai-shek who massacred the Shanghai Soviet in 1927. Stalin had made him an honorary member of the Comintern.

gramme for the emancipation of all the specially oppressed. We support the right of women, Black and Asian people, lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people to caucus inside the unions, in social democratic parties and in revolutionary socialist parties also. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist attacks. Self-defence is no offence! We fight for an end to all discrimination against lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people, and against harassment whether by the

state or by homophobic reactionaries. Abolish all laws used to persecute lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people - gross indecency, soliciting, obscenity laws, blasphemy laws, etc.

13. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance Capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Demands for immigration controls are fuelled by the right-wing press, and imposed by Brown and the Enoch Powell-like immigration minister Phil Woolas to undermine workers organisation and collective solidarity. Big trade unions like Unite and the GMB who now supply 90% of Labour party funding and who could easily call the tune on this and on the anti-union laws, etc acquiesce to Brown on everything; we must demand they begin a real campaign in defence of immigrants to combat the media bias. We must unconditionally defend the rights of all workers to seek the best remuneration for their labour in the metropolitan countries and fight there the enemy which has destroyed their lives in their own countries. At the same time we support those workers in non-metropolitan countries in struggle against their imperialist employers, landlords etc! This includes workers in the west taking action in defence of their broth-

ers/sisters in Africa or which-ever part of the 'third world'! We recognise and celebrate the US dock strike on May Day 2008, (the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) closed all the ports on the west side of the country, from California up through Oregon to Washington) against the war in Iraq as the most important way for workers to combat imperialist war.

14. We demand of all governments a world plan to combat climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transnational corporations. But we recognise this is a vitally important **class** question. Ecological catastrophe is caused by imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution. But transitional demands on governments are crucial here; cheap and ultimately free nationalised public transport by trains and buses and a halt to Airport runway expansions as at Heathrow to reduce the carbon emission of cars, trucks and planes, wind, wave and solar power generated electricity, international and ultimately global energy and water networks, an end to rainforest destruction by a global ban on trade in hardwoods and other timber produced there, serious recycling programmes that reward rather than penalise, etc., whilst recognising that individual efforts make little difference and plastic-bag ecology is used by governments to guilt-trip individuals and avoid internationally co-ordinated actions

which can alone reverse this drift towards disaster. We must therefore focus our demands on making the case for a global planned economy by a global federation of workers' states, only this can prevent ecological catastrophe.

15. As revolutionary international socialists we support Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and its applicability to the present era of globalisation. We also support Lenin's differentiation of all nations into imperialist oppressor nations and oppressed colonial or semi-colonial nations. We are always and in all circumstances for the defeat of imperialism as the main enemy of progressive humanity even by non-working class forces in wars between imperialism and oppressed nations. In defending the strategy of permanent revolution in the semi-colonial world we reject both 'two-stage' conceptions and the idea of 'socialism in one country' as reactionary utopias.

16. We recognise that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of the Soviet Union (1989-91) represented a victory for the neo-liberal agenda of US and world imperialism. Whilst we are for the defence of democratic rights including the right to national self-determination we recognise that individual rights are bourgeois values which presuppose inequality and fail to defend the collective rights of the mass of humanity to food, water, hous-



Rosa Luxemburg: murdered in Berlin by the Freikorps under the orders of the German Social Democrats 90 years ago.

ing, education, comprehensive health care, etc. We recognise individual workers and small impoverished nations are at the mercy of powerful imperialist corporations and nations so we fight for individual rights and national rights in a collective, that is in a class and not in a libertarian way; e.g. we fight for the 'no platforming' of fascists and oppose free market exploitation of small countries. We would curtail the democratic rights of capitalists and would replace the anarchy of the free market with an economy planned to satisfy human need and not profit. We do not always advocate separation of small nations despite recognising their right to form their own state if a majority desire it.

17. The betrayals of the discredited Labour government in the face of the growing financial and economic crises give the fascists of the BNP hope of advancement. They now have fifty eight local councillors in Britain

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International, Go Forward!

(BBC estimates) and a member on the Greater London Assembly. But the rise of fascism in a period of capitalist crisis cannot be prevented without a fight encapsulating the basics of revolutionary struggle: anti-fascists need to be well organised and democratically centralised, independent of the bourgeoisie and with a revolutionary programme utilising the traditional method of No Platform. Here as elsewhere transitional demands do not necessarily lead all the way to the seizure of power – e.g. for now we are for the maximum independent self-organisation of the working class in the struggle against fascism: we are for the building of democratic, representative committees of the local and antifa working class charged with organising the prevention of the dissemination of fascist ideas/influence: that is a transitional demand because it takes us from where we are to a better place where the fighting capacity and abilities of the working class has increased, and it is in no way incompatible with the next step – in fact it should lead directly onto that next step.

We need to combine these local transitional demands with the line of our international organisation. This is totally opposed to the popular front methods of appealing to the police and demands for a vote even for Boris Johnson against the BNP (Hope not Hate) and spreading dangerous illusions that the state protects us against the fascists as practiced by the SWP's Unite Against Fascism (UAF).

18. We dissociate ourselves from the organisational meth-

ods of most post war Trotskyist groups. These can be characterised as a) bureaucratic centralist with a top-down elitist leadership, often with a single guru-like figure, and b) sectarian in the sense of wishing to control or destroy broad movements or campaigns. We are in favour of democratic centralism in an open democratic party with rights for factions and tendencies.

19. We are for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution and will fight for the fusions and splits necessary for this in our international work. We recognise the majority of those forces internationally who claim the name of Trotskyism as centrists, in the Marxist sense that they capitulate to bourgeois ideology but also tend to relate to aspects of the revolutionary method of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme at times and seek to peruse some of its method in however inadequate a form. These forces, despite their degenerate and cynical centrist leaderships, do contain the vast bulk of subjectively revolutionary socialists on the planet. 'Soft', reformist, moral pressure power of global networks will not work for climate change, poverty or rebuilding a revolutionary international.



US and world imperialism can deploy 'hard' economic and military power and we must orientate to the forces who can also deploy hard power on behalf of the working class and oppressed internationally; workers' organisation which can deliver hard power by strikes and mass mobilisations which can physically stop whole economies, the movement of war munitions and armies, etc. and so can place revolution on the agenda.

It is by orientating to the ranks of these workers in struggle that we will win the forces from Trotskyist-centrist groups, and of course by working closely to regroup with those groups nationally and internationally who have made significant advances in breaking from that centrism. In this way we aim to assist in reconstructing the Fourth International.

Mike Macnair: An Inconsistent Neo-Kautskyite

A third campist who cannot proceed 'from the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat'

Ret Marut reviews CPGB leader Mike Macnair's *Revolutionary strategy* (November publications, 2008, pp204, £7.99) and reviews the reviews from three opposed political positions, the CPGB's own James Turley, *The Commune's* by David Broder and Permanent Revolution's Bill Jefferies (in comments on the latter's blog) and David Esterson in PR Issue 11.

Polemic

'...the 'Third Camp'. What is this animal? There is the camp of capitalism; there is the camp of the proletariat. But is there perhaps a 'third camp' – a petit-bourgeois sanctuary? In the nature of things, it is nothing else... As if this 'third camp' (what is it? a party? a club? a League of Abandoned Hopes? a 'People's Front'?) is free from the obligation of having a correct policy toward the petty bourgeoisie, the trade unions, India and the USSR!'

Leon Trotsky's *In Defence of Marxism* 'Part VII Petty-Bourgeois Moralists and the Proletarian Party' April 1940.

Introduction

Of the three reviews by far the most incisive politically is the PR one (we will take the two as one politically) by Bill Jefferies and Dave Esterson.

Given that they have reasonably satisfactorily covered most of the issues of revolutionary strategy, with the very important exceptions of the state and Internationalism, we will concentrate on these. At the beginning it will be helpful to the reader to understand that the standpoint of the PR review is that of Trotskyism (as they understand it), that of

The Commune is that of Left Communism, the ultra-left Marxists within the Bolshevik party and other libertarian Marxists who opposed Lenin in alliance with the anarchists from time to time and on certain issues, e.g. on Brest-Litovsk, on Soviets, on democracy, on workers' control and



Lenin famously dubbed Kautsky a 'renegade' because he had betrayed Marxism by refusing to relate it to a real revolution, thus providing left cover for the SPD counterrevolution.

on the workers' state. The politics of the CPGB is inconsistent Kautskyism. However As jschulman wrote on *The Commune* website on 31/8/08 in support of Macnair, 'Bill J is still misrepresenting McNair (sic). McNair is not arguing for a 100% 'Kautskyite' party'. How much then; 75%, 87% or what? However the CPGB are also libertarian Marxists in

their own inconsistent way, refusing to no platform fascists on the JS Mill criterion of non-class 'free speech' and opposing the workers' state; both the healthy one of Lenin and the degenerate one of Stalinism and affirming that the Russian Revolution had been lost after a few months because the 'gamble' on the revolutions in Europe had failed. To further complicate matters, however, the CPGB does defend the necessity for a revolutionary party (as they see it), which *The Commune* rejects together with the workers' state. And on top of that PR still retains its theoretical claims that 'as a result (of capitalism being abolished without the workers' revolution in 1947-48 in Eastern Europe) the Stalinist bureaucracy was able to construct an apparatus (!) which was a bourgeois organ (!) in a workers' state'. So the Soviet state always was a 'bourgeois organ in a workers' state' or reverted /morphed itself into that in 1918, 1928, or 1939 or on some other suitable date. We will deal with this crucial point later.

Semantics and pragmatics

Bill Jefferies in his review obviously became very frustrated

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International, Go Forward!

at the adroitness of Macnair's semantics and pragmatics as he attempted to nail the centrist jelly of the CPGB to the ceiling; whatever position he quoted it seemed as if Mike Macnair could prove him wrong with another quote and moreover, like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass* words like 'democracy', 'majority', 'smash the state', etc. meant whatever he wanted them to mean.

The CPGB has its own internal thesaurus, invented and understood by themselves, others may be initiated if they listen carefully but the vast bulk of humanity will simply think that these words mean what they say, they will think the 'democratic republic' means a two stage theory and a bourgeois democratic republic, that implementing your minimum programme does not mean smashing the state and that championing the patience of the Kautsky centre and winning the majority before the revolution means reformism and Chile 1973. Indeed no, protests Macnair, it simply means that to everyone else, we, the initiated, know the truth.

And separating the minimum programme from the maximum programme and championing the Erfurt Programme against the Comintern's United Front of working class organisations and the Transitional Programme and method is not an advocacy of centrist Kautskyism but a Marxist revolutionary strategy which no

other Marxists can quite grasp and by which they might win the masses and the other third camp centrists because they mistakenly believe that we mean what we say and not what we really mean, which is only revealed to the initiated. And then we can proclaim that the working class will take power as soon as they learn that words really mean the opposite of what they say, if only properly understood in a Marxist way. Bill was obviously Alice vs. Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*;

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said. Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't – till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'" "But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all." Alice was too much puzzled to say anything, so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. "They've a temper, some of them – particularly verbs, they're the proudest – adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs – however, I can manage the whole lot! Impenetrability! That's what I say!"

It is all great fun unless



you are an advanced worker seeking some advice on what to do.

In defence of the book James Turley scores a direct hit on *The Commune*, on Workers Power and PR, 'The anti-globalisation movement seemed to stem the tide... (but) it has not come winging to the rescue of the Socialist Workers Party, Workers Power or any of the other starry-eyed Trotskyist and sub-Trotskyist groups who dived in feet first after Seattle. The real beneficiary has been the jumble of anti-centralist, localist ideas collectively known as social-anarchism'.

Indeed, the idea that 'soft power' protests as opposed to 'hard power' strikes and occupations would challenge the 'hard power' of Bush and Blair was totally wrong and will not build an international no matter what number we ascribe to it. But Workers Power are still trying to revive the social forums; 'This means rebuilding organisations like the social forums that played an important part in the mass mobilisations against the G8 in Genoa

in 2001 and the huge antiwar mobilisations after the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002. Despite this, they withered in the years of unfocussed resistance to Berlusconi's previous government and the disastrous 'Left' government of Prodi, Veltroni and Bertinotti.' Leave it go now!



Raul Castro (left), and Ernesto Che Guevara, in their Sierra de Cristal Mountain in 1958. This petty bourgeois leadership was forced by US blockade to initiate, guard and defend the property relations of a workers' state.

And Turley scores glancing blows on all three political positions revealed in the book and other reviews when he says, 'It also seems to me a little mean-spirited to describe the Trotskyists' wrangling over the Russian question as 'a bizarre body of competing theological dogmas' (p143). The fact that it has surfaced again and again as a split question is regrettable, to say the least; however, the Soviet Union remains a crucial test case for Marxist analysis, and despite the fact that most of it is simply wrong, the debates in the Trotskyist movement on the Stalinist countries and the vast resultant theoretical product is

rather the *best* of its legacy than the worst'.

It is obviously somewhat disingenuous to say that 'most of it is simply wrong' and then to say 'the vast resultant theoretical product is rather the *best* of its legacy than the worst' unless you are about to come up with the correct solution. It could be CPGB double speak, genuine confusion or a plea for help. In the hope that it is the latter here goes:

The Marxist theory of the state

Trotsky clearly lays down the Marxist criteria on which we must judge the class nature of all states:

'The class nature of the state is, consequently determined not by its political forms but by its social content; i.e. by the character of the forms of property and productive relations which the given state guards and defends'...

But does not history really know of cases of class conflict between the economy and the state? It does! After the 'third estate' seized power, society for several years still remained feudal. In the first months of Soviet rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of a bourgeois economy.

In the field of agriculture the dictatorship of the proletariat operated for a number of years on the basis of a petty-bourgeois economy (to a considerable degree it does so even now). Should a bourgeois

counter-revolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalised economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a revolution or a counterrevolution. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victors.

But such a dichotomous conditions, which is a necessary stage in every social overturn, has nothing in common with the theory of a classless state which in the absence of any real boss is being exploited by a clerk, i.e. the bureaucracy.'

This quote really is the criterion by which to judge all states. The Stalinist bureaucracies defended proletarian property forms and productive relations, albeit in a primitive form and with their own oppressive, bureaucratic, counter-revolutionary methods because it was the source of their own privileges.

This horribly distorted the planned economy and obviously could only partially suppress the law of value as they were backward economies which inevitably reproduced bourgeois social relations of production. They produced for the plan not in the main for the market, although the market did determine the forms of distribution. The deformed and degenerated workers' states thus had a 'dual, contradictory

character' between the proletarian property forms and the bourgeois distribution but it was the proletarian pole of that contradiction that was dominant. In 1989-91 the Stalinists themselves not only ceased to defend but actively participated in the destruction of these workers' states to secure a new source of privilege when they judged the old one could no longer guaranteed anything.

Deformed workers' states came into being when the state forces, either directed by Stalinists or by a bourgeois nationalist regime decided to expropriate the bourgeoisie, institute a planned economy, despite all the corruption and counter-revolutionary methods of the ruling casts. The overturns happened in 1989-91 in Eastern Europe and the USSR and in China after the Tiananmen Square massacre 4 May 1989 and Vietnam simply followed suit by a cold stroke. These overturns again took place when the state, either still led by Stalinists or led by a restorationist bourgeoisie (e.g. China and the USSR) decided and embarked on a course to restore capitalism, restore private ownership and property, the stock exchange, and produce, in the main, for the market. North Korea, a truly horrendously deformed workers' state, and Cuba still remain workers' states but it is clear their life expectancy is now short.

Macnair wishes to confuse us by exploiting the confusion of

Marx and Engels on the question of the workers' state. Their judgements were formed at a time when the organizations of the working class had not sufficiently matured to challenge directly for power by establishing their hegemony over society via the revolutionary soviets seen first in 1905. For all serious Marxists this ended the speculation on the form a workers' state must take, on the counterposition between bourgeois and proletarian democracy and on the class nature of the state that workers must build to advance their revolution. This is unambiguously a **workers' state**, what else could it be comrades?

Macnair thinks that saying with Marx that the democratic republic is the form the dictatorship of the proletariat must take, and refusing to answer a direct question from Jefferies as to what the class content of this democratic republic might be means Marx and Engels were right to speculate that the working class could take power in France, Britain and the USA through universal suffrage.

Of course on this question *The Commune* is totally mistaken and produce by far the worst line. How on earth any serious Marxist can imagine that the revolution, even if there was little resistance and no civil war, could simply produce the material wherewithal of a super abundance of wealth to enable full social and economic



Russia's DneproGES hydro-electric power plant, trumpeted as a triumph for socialism but state planning does not make a workers' state.

equality to prevail is beyond me. Not to mention the 'muck of ages' the approximately nine thousand years of class rule with the concomitant reactionary social attitudes of the ruling classes and their ideological dependents and everyone else – 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas'

This can only really be overcome on the basis of a future communist society of social and economic equality where labour is life's main requirement not its oppressor. The CPGB incredible voted against the phrase 'social and economic equality' at the 2007 CMP Conference clearly because they had the limited reformist aims of the democratic republic and the minimum programme. And the super abundance of wealth cannot be produced nationally; the key to that is world revolution, for which only Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution produces a programme.

But the PR line (and there is no indication of differences with Workers Power on this issue) is incorrect. In 1982 Workers Power and the Irish

Workers Group published *The Degenerated Revolution, the Origin and Nature of the Stalinist States*, which claimed the overturns took place when the Red Army invaded in 1945 and purely economic questions determine the class character of a state; if the law of value operates freely it is bourgeois, if it is suppressed it is a workers' state, regardless of which class's interests the state itself guards and defends, raising the intriguing possibility of a fascist regime presiding over a workers' state.

Further it was state planning that defined the workers' state, implying that the Soviet state was capitalist until 1928 when the first five year plan was initiated and therefore Stalinism must have been a better representative of the international proletariat than Lenin. Stung by external opposition from the LTT/WIL and internal opposition from the Proletarian Faction they wheeled theoretically again and declared the theory of Moribund Workers' States. These were all like Poland, which, according to Keith Harvey, was 'a 'bourgeois workers' government' according to Lenin's definition i.e. 'a government resting on the working class and its organisations but thoroughly bourgeois and pro-capitalist in its programme.' That is a bourgeois state according to Trotsky's definition above.

The 1995 LTT document *The Marxist Theory Of The State And The Collapse Of Stalinism*

neatly sums up the economism of Workers Power on this question, 'The attempt to define the state in purely economic terms leads Workers Power to the following conclusion:



'A change of leading personnel within the already bourgeois-type state machine - from objective to subjective restorationists - is not the qualitative moment of transition from a workers' to a bourgeois state. Only a tendency that had in all essentials abandoned Trotsky's analysis could identify the collapse of the bureaucratic dictatorship with the collapse of the workers' state itself.'

In which case, among those who have 'in all essentials abandoned Trotsky's analysis', we must include ...Trotsky! : 'The inevitable collapse of Stalinist Bonapartism would immediately call into question the character of the USSR as a

workers' state. Socialist economy cannot be constructed without a socialist power. The fate of the USSR as a *socialist* state depends upon that *political* regime which will arise to replace Stalinist Bonapartism.'

Having theoretically turned they turned again like Whittington's cat and finally came to the modern position in 1998, 'As a result the Stalinist bureaucracy was able to construct an apparatus which was a bourgeois organ in a workers' state...These modifications can be seen as further perfecting the bourgeois state machine in the workers' state since they represent nothing other than a further method by which the state enforces repression, atomises and renders completely unaccountable the political administration. So the apparatus (state forces) constructed a bourgeois organ (that must be a bourgeois state) inside a workers' state (by which they mean the part of the state comprising nationalised property which presumably they think determine the class character of the state). Using these same criteria the Grantites concluded that workers' states had been set up at various times in Burma, Ethiopia and Egypt. But it would be over-consistent for PR/WP to reach such ridiculous conclusions.

Third campism and national chauvinism

All this third campism and fudging means that there is no fundamental understanding of

internationalism in Macnair's book, obviously we will get none from localists like *The Commune* but PR should have little either if they were consistent in defending the above positions. But they are far better in practice and in theory elsewhere than if they fully accepted those millstone documents.

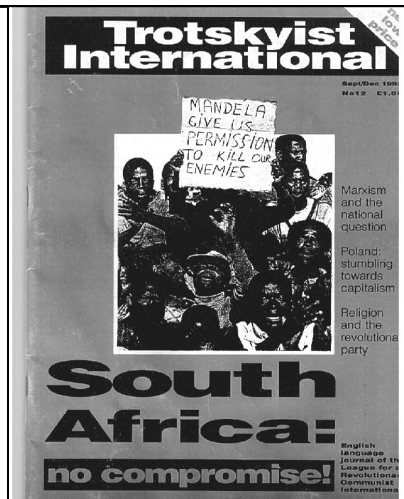
Macnair reveals his true capitulation to national chauvinism and anti-internationalism in the following passage, 'The defencist argument, it should be clear from both the Chinese case and the hypostasis of a Britain-Brazil war, is an argument about the road of the working class to power in a colonial or semi-colonial country under attack from an imperialist power. It is a variant of the line of the anti-imperialist united front (AIUF) I have argued against in my 2000 series on imperialism' (p.79).

That most certainly is NOT what the defencist/defeatist argument is about NOR what the AIUF is about. Amazingly no reviewer has spotted this truly appalling position, demonstrating their own weakness on it.

Trotsky explains, 'From the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat, Finnish resistance (to Stalin) was no more an act of independent national defence than is the resistance of Norway (to Hitler). This was best demonstrated by the Finnish government itself which preferred to cease all resistance rather than

have Finland completely transformed into a military base of England, France and the United States. Secondary factors like the national independence of Finland or Norway, the defence of democracy, etc., however important in themselves, are now intertwined in the struggle of infinitely more powerful world forces and are completely subordinate to them. We must discount these secondary factors and determine our policy in accordance with the basic factors'.

Trotsky has spelled it out above; Marxist must approach these global events from the standpoint of the 'strategy of the world proletariat', not from that of a single national working class in a colony, semi-colony, in a degenerated or deformed workers' state or even in an imperialist nation. The class consciousness of the proletariat is an international phenomena; the defeat of the USSR would have then and did in 1989-91 deal a savage blow to it as does the victory of imperialism over colonies and semi-colonies in war. None of our three reviewers understands this vital political principle; Workers Power sought a united front with Yeltsin against the 1991 Yanayev coup simply in defence of democracy. Macnair treats internationalism as the sum total of the class consciousness of the national working classes, demonstrating that he still retains the shadow, at the very least, of socialism in a single country. And libertarian Marxists and anarchists are mere localists,



No 12 Sept/Dec 1993. The LRCI has Poland 'stumbling towards capitalism' four years after it was restored.

despite their 'international' organisations and proclamations.

Macnair writes that 'although Trotsky's analysis of the USSR as a gain for the working class was wrong, and so a 'revolutionary defencist' attitude towards its attacks on Finland, Poland and the Baltic States in autumn 1939 would be misplaced, he would take a revolutionary defencist attitude to the USSR 'in some circumstances (like the 1941 German invasion)' (p.82). So he is inconsistently defencist here but on Ethiopia, China and Brazil he reveals his national chauvinism in detail.

Observe how Trotsky deals with Brazil in elaborating the strategy to show 'on whose side will the working class be?'— and here he is addressing the consciousness of the world working class. To fool us that Trotsky is only concerned with the consciousness of the Brazilian working class (in line with his definition of defencism and

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the AIUF above) Macnair gives us the first part of the quote from Trotsky only. 'In Brazil there now reigns a semi-fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I will be on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil'. And here the quote stops.

But he has left out the most important consideration even from Brazilian national consideration by omitting to finish the quote. He does not want us to ask what might happen to the class consciousness of the working class of Britain, the world and the Brazilian working class if Brazil was victorious,

'If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle be-

tween fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!'

Having totally misrepresented Trotsky to portray him as one who disregarded internationalism, he claims in footnote 73 that as Britain had voluntarily conceded its interests in Brazil to the US and so 'a British war



Galtieri; his overthrow in 1982 did nothing to compensate for imperialism's victory.

with the Vargas regime ... would have amounted in substance to an attack on US imperialist interests and would precipitate a British-US inter-imperialist war'.

Well that certainly was not what happened in 1982 when Britain attacked semi-fascist Galtieri-governed Argentina, which is a US semi-colony like Brazil was in 1938. The US gave every assistance to the British war fleet to defeat Argentina just as she would have done to defeat Brazil in 1938, because Alexander Haig was a better strategist for imperialism than Macnair is for the world working class. And, of course, the CPGB predecessor, the

Leninist, took the exact same position of capitulating to British imperialist chauvinism as the Militant, Matgamna and even the Alan Thornett opposition in the WSL by taking a fudged position. Do we need to point out that consistent revolutionists, in every country in the planet but particularly in Britain, would have been for the defeat of the British expeditionary force? As we are for the defeat of imperialism in Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza regardless of who constitutes the leadership of the oppressed masses there.

And need we point out the dire political consequence of this for the British and world working class however much imperialism's apologists on the far left might have sought to obfuscate their treachery by trumpeting the secondary gain of the overthrow of Galtieri.

The British working class were left ideologically leaderless by the national chauvinism of Michael Foot and the other labour leaders, Regan/Volker defeated the 1981-82 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike while the war was going on and embarked on a simultaneous ruthless offensive against the US working class, which set the pattern for the offensive of every capitalist class against their own working class worldwide. All this prepared for imperialism's crowning achievement, the *world*-historical defeat which the *world* working class suffered in the overthrow of the Soviet Union. But at

least we got rid of Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri Castelli!

And of course on China and Ethiopia the prime consideration had to be to defeat Japanese and Italian imperialism in order to strengthen the class consciousness of these powerful metropolitan working classes and the working class in China, Ethiopia and the world. We must formulate our political outlook 'from the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat'. I will leave it to others to seek out the quotes from Trotsky on these two conflicts to see if that really was his strategy there too and to decide if they agree with it. We have no doubts.

In fact Broder's *Commune*, who are now recruiting from Cliff Slaughter's anti-Leninist group on the basis that the Libertarian Marxist Cyril Smith had finally expunged violence from the arsenal of revolutionary Marxism, attacks Macnair *from the right* on this point. In condemning Macnair's apparent capitulation to 'a series of manoeuvres and alliances' (i.e. not consistently capitulating to imperialism, he must be upset by HOPI's identification of imperialism as the main enemy) he then goes on to say that on the 'Trotskyist *left* undue stress is often laid on the idea that the problem with cross-class alliances is that they are inoperable and fail, as in the case of the Spanish civil war, rather than that they are unprincipled'.

The total opposite is the truth, genuine Trotskyists, following Trotsky, make an absolute

principle of not tolerating Popular Fronts, it was the POUMists and anarchists who entered the popular front government in Barcelona and so betrayed the Spanish revolution, as Broder himself admits.

So why does he perpetrate this unwarranted libel? The problem is, of course, like all libertarians and anarchists, he simply does not acknowledge the existence of oppressor and oppressed nations or concede that there is a problem about the class nature of the USSR. Imperialist Spain in revolution is the same as Iraq, Ireland, Ethiopia, Vietnam, the USSR or even Grenada under assault from imperialist powers he thinks. The USA and all imperialist powers are capitalists like the rest so in war we must not distinguish between oppressor and oppressed, we must reject all silly 'manoeuvres' and not enter any 'cross-class alliances' like defending Hamas in Gaza against imperialist attacks.

As for Macnair's attitude to the USSR Broder complains, 'he would take a revolutionary defence attitude to the USSR 'in some circumstances (like the 1941 German invasion)' (p.82). Quite why he would do so is not explained'. So Broder is charging Macnair with being inconsistently reactionary on this point, not inconsistently revolutionary.



Conclusion

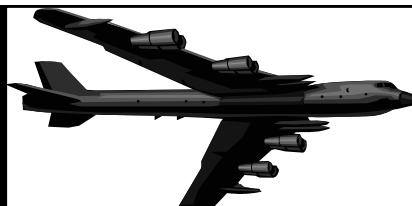
So in conclusion the CPGB and *The Commune* (like their parent group, the AWL) are third campists and PR/WP has made big concessions to this by their bowdlerisation of the Marxist theory of the state although, to be fair, this does not impinge overmuch on their polemics.

As the world recession deepens to reveal itself as perhaps the most serious ever in peace time it really is time to begin to sort out these very serious problems for the revolutionary left. And we really must proceed 'from the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat' not from national or local considerations which can only strengthen imperialism and corrode revolutionary perspectives.

For a fully annotated version of this article email:
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Gaza: Smash the Siege!

By Yossi Schwartz in Israel (Socialist Fight is for a bi-national workers state; Yossi is an old comrade and we are pleased to publish his guest article)



Not for a cease fire but for the immediate withdrawal of Israel and the smashing of the siege of Gaza.

After 23 days of extermination by air and ground in Gaza, Israel could not achieve its goals: It was unable to kill or imprison all Hamas leaders and destroy the operational infrastructure for launching rockets to Israeli cities near the Palestinian border. Most importantly unlike the Israelis the imperialist rulers of US and Europe have realized that Israel has not weakened the will of the Arab masses and in particular the Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and the refugee camps to resist Israeli oppression but has strengthened the resistance backed by the majority of the people in the region and around the world. The instability of the Middle East is growing and the pro imperialist states like Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia are in danger of being overthrown by the masses.

Israel was forced unilaterally to declare a ceasefire after it claimed that it has completed the operation 'Cast Lead', first by air and then by land, that so far has caused 1300 deaths, one third women and children, more than 5,000 wounded and a new wave of refugees. In spite of the killing of some of the Hamas military and political leaders their political-military apparatus continues to operate and fight, Palestinian rockets continued to fall on Israel until Hamas accepted the ceasefire.

On Saturday, January 3, after five consecutive days of bombings, Israel decided to invade Gaza by land with the aim of wiping out Hamas's military bunkers and rocket launching infrastructure. It sent in 10,000 troops, including elite forces that had trained for months to occupy Gaza. They received intelligence, and the backing of powerful air and naval fire. They were able to enter and divide Gaza into three areas to isolate and cut the logistics and communications system and operations of Hamas and other organizations of the Palestinian resistance. However, in spite of the Zionist military superiority it is clear that Israel has failed. It signed an agreement for a cease fire with...the US while Hamas rejected this imaginary ceasefire until they were ready.

Israel has never been so isolated in the region and in the world as in this war. It faced two choices; either to leave Gaza immediately while Hamas is seen as the winner not only among the Arabs in the region but in the eyes of many Israelis like Shalit's supporters, or to stay and sink in Gaza as has happened to the US in Iraq. It sensibly chose the former.



Even imperialist states were forced under pressure of mass demonstrations to criticise the mode of fighting: the IDF bombed Hamas positions and the civilian population from the sea, air and land to 'clear the area' and then moved in their commandos to their targets. Israel cannot overcome Hamas in this war; a guerrilla war in an urban area with a high concentration of civilians where Zionist tanks and armoured units have little room to move and operate, and where their fire power (prepared for wars in open spaces) cause more civilian casualties than those of resistance fighters. The Zionist's propaganda tries to blame Hamas for the civilians death in Gaza. However by doing it they spit on the memory of the Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto who used the same strategy. And how else do you fight from a ghetto?

During the ground assault Hamas fighters would attack the Israeli troops with mortars and grenades and armoured units and then they disappear without a trace within the civilian population. Israeli troops in frustration would bombard schools, Mosques and Hospitals. So Israel had to agree to the cease fire. But moral victory is not sufficient to defeat Israel. The only way to defeat the Israeli monster is a working class revolutionary struggle. A socialist revolution led by revolutionary working class parties. Only a Palestinians Workers Republic from the sea to the river within the socialist federation of the Middle East will end the constant rivers of blood for which Israel and its supporters are responsible.

The Campaign for A Marxist Party RIP 2006-2008

Political differences were the cause of its demise. The CPGB basically called a halt at the 6th December 2008 AGM because the CMP was going nowhere and worse, they were losing the political arguments between Trotskyism and neo-Kautskyism. This was reflected in the failure to produce a joint Manifesto between Hillel Ticktin's Critique Group and the CPGB because comrade Ticktin insisted that any Marxist party had to be Trotskyist. Indeed the very name Marxist Party was intended to suggest that the 20th century, including the Russian Revolution, had been one big 'gamble' that failed and we must now get back to Marx and Kautsky. The dispute over the threat of violence was a cover by both the DSA and the CPGB to avoid political struggle. Like Marxism Today twenty years ago the CPGB have 'recognised the obsolescence of much of the left's propositions' and are determined to make their own contribution by forging a new 'Marxism' unencumbered by the nastiness of the Twentieth Century, in particular that life-and-death struggle between Stalinism and Trotskyism.